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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
and
LAND-GRANT COLLEGES COOPERATING
Washington 25, D. C.

HANDBOOK FOR TECHNICAL LEADERS

Of Special Training Courses for Foreign Agricultural Visitors
Sponsored by Foreign Operations Administration

April 1955





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
and
LAND-GRANT COLLEGES COOPERATING
Washington 25, D. C.

April 4, 1955

HANDBOOK FOR TECHNICAL LEADERS *

This little booklet is designed to help you, the technical leader.

The contents herein are gleanings of the experiences of technical leaders on agricultural and home economics training projects for foreign visitors that have been summarized here in order that you, a technical leader for a group having certain things in common with previous ones, can profit by the experiences of those technical leaders who have gone before.

Forewarned is forearmed.

There is, indeed, much you can do in advance to help avoid many headaches. The most successful training projects are those which have been the most carefully planned and coordinated on a national and state level.

It is respectfully suggested that you read carefully these composite recommendations of other technical leaders and take advantage of such time as you have available prior to departure to apply them to your particular project.

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* This material is prepared for the guidance of technical leaders accompanying groups of foreign visitors participating in FOA special short courses in the food, agriculture and home economics field. Major preparation was done by Layne Beaty, Chief of the Radio and Television Service in USDA's Office of Information and technical leader for an FOA agricultural press and radio course in 1954. The ideas are not entirely his, but represent a compilation of suggestions submitted by a number of other technical leaders who have travelled with FOA foreign groups in the past several years.

BEFORE YOU REPORT FOR DUTY

If you are not familiar with the countries from which your charges come, get a fill-in on some general facts pertaining to those countries.

From people who have been there, from the Embassy involved, from encyclopedias and other sources you can get a mental picture of the shape and size of the country, some historical and ethnic background, social structure, economic conditions, customs and traditions, levels of living, principal cities, main crops, exports and industries, form of government and recent politics. The program specialist can probably supply some materials.

Having a backlog of this sort of information will come in handy in understanding the visitors, making the job easier for you and helping everyone involved to get the most from the project.

WHEN YOU REPORT FOR DUTY

Before the visitors arrive become thoroughly familiar with:

1. The aims of the training program. (See background statements prepared by FOA overseas mission--the program specialist in USDA has copies.)
2. The program and schedule in detail. (Advance conferences with USDA program specialist, and FOA technical adviser.)
3. The participants' biographical data-- their education, their background, and present jobs. Also look up their pictures in the program specialists' office. Keep copies of bio data with you on the trip for repeated reference.

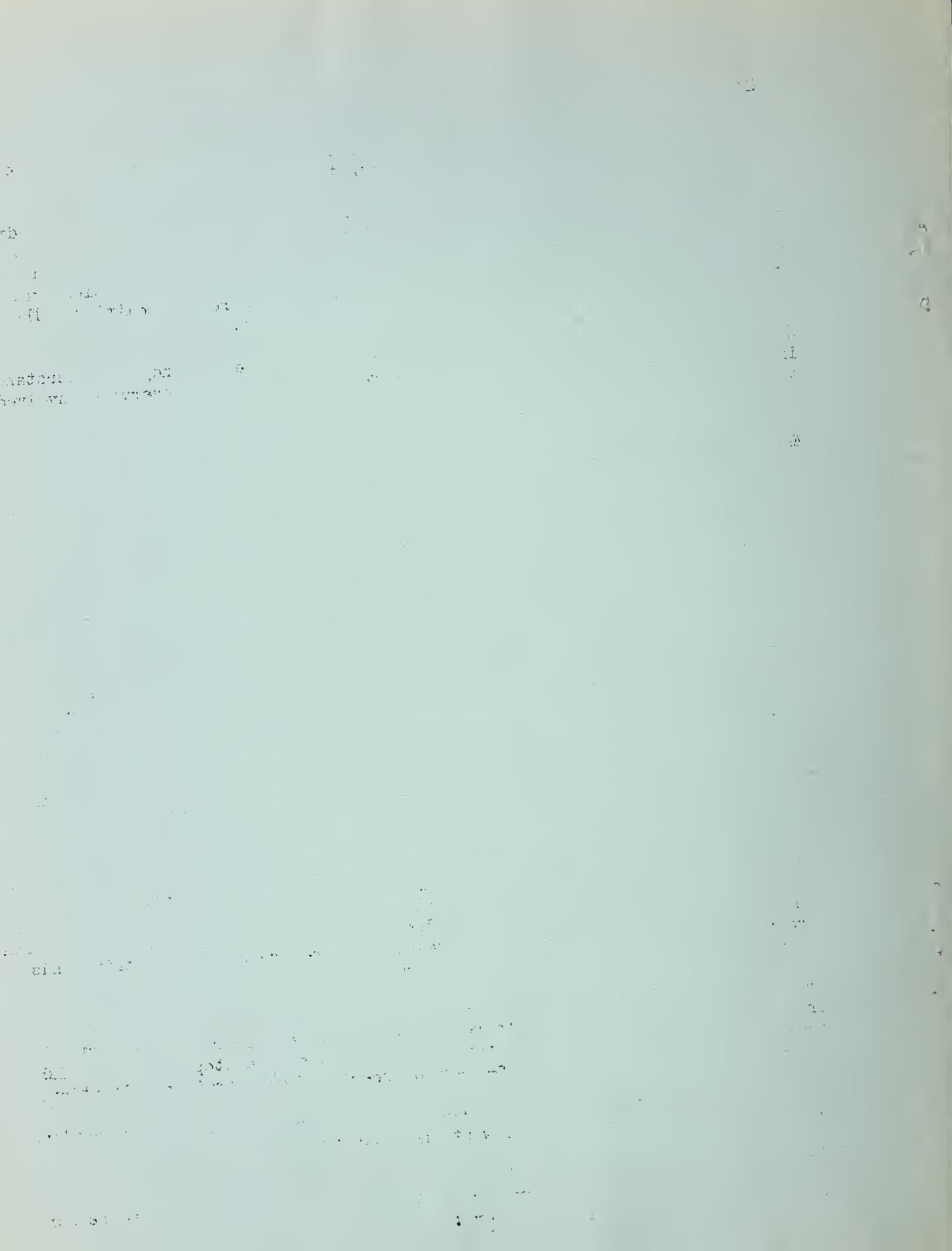
Get acquainted with your interpreters (if any), establish friendly relations and with the help of the program specialist help him understand what is expected of him. (See section on interpreters)

Read the correspondence that has gone back and forth between FAS and field contacts about the program to get a thorough fill-in on how the program has been developed. A thorough study of material from FOA relating to the project will be helpful in providing background. Also, you may wish to discuss with the USDA service which took the leadership in developing the program why certain kinds of training and training locations were chosen.

Become familiar with what is expected at each stop and be prepared to help direct activities once you get there if there is some failure on the part of local people. However, also be prepared to evaluate such stops--you may wish to keep a list of the good and not-so-good aspects of each training situation.

It's well to understand that local people have the responsibility for handling the local program. But they will want and need your guidance.

Make an appointment with the Chief of the Training Arrangements Branch at FOA (Room 603) and the technical adviser at FOA assigned to your group and be sure you're clear on the following matters:

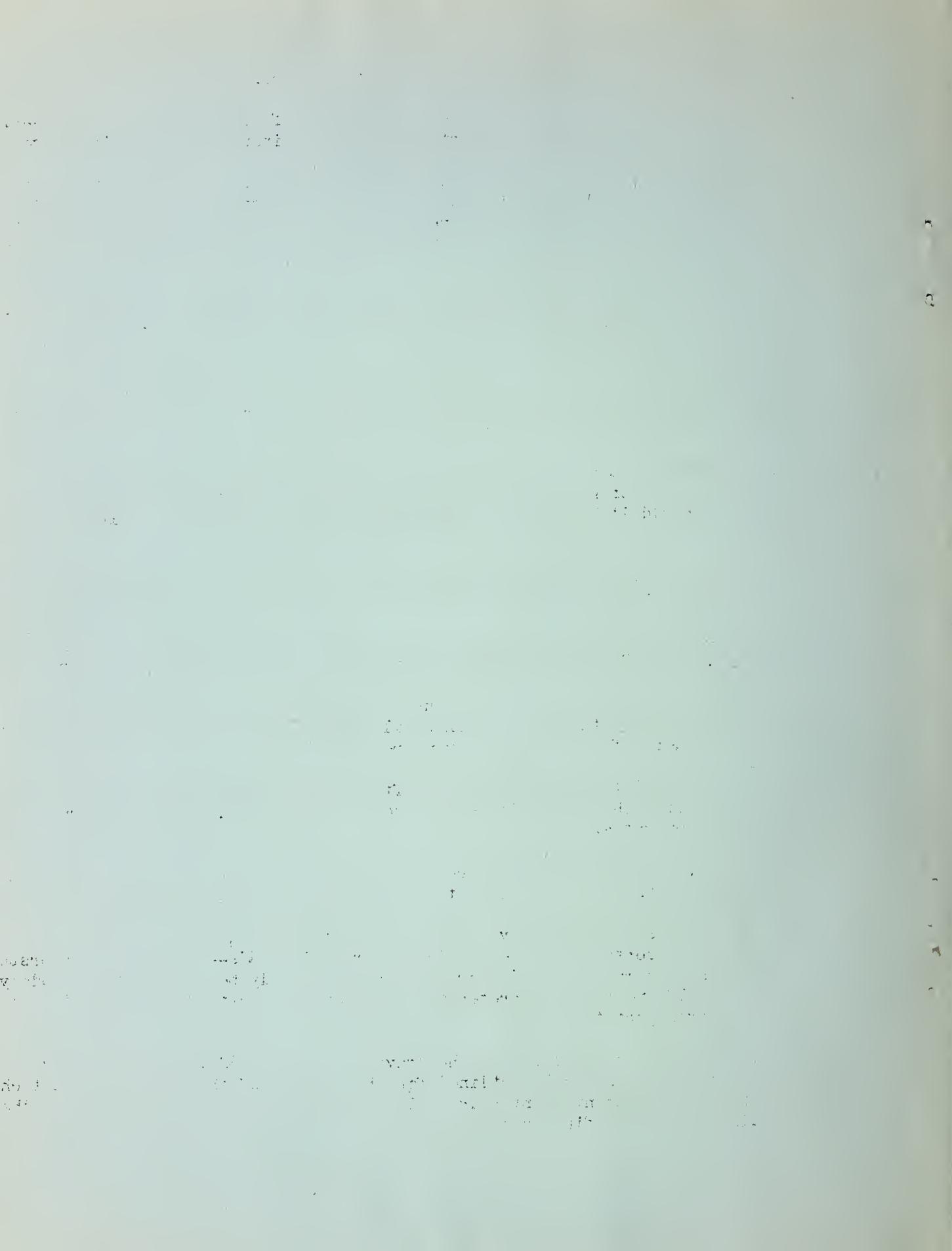


1. The procedure in calling doctors in case of sickness or emergency.
2. What to do about insurance in case of sickness or emergency--(incidentally, be sure and obtain some extra insurance claim forms from him.)
3. The procedure for shipping printed materials while group is out of Washington, being careful to get a full supply of shipping labels addressed to the Atlantic Forwarding Company. Be sure you know what kind of packages can be sent C.O.D. and which kind must be paid for by FOA participant. Also, be clear on filling out the "Declaration of Contents."
4. The policy concerning extending programs for training in the U. S. You may get a good many questions from participants who desire to remain longer than originally scheduled.
5. Regulations, possible schedules, and mode of transportation (ship or plane) concerning return trip to home country. You'll get many questions on this, especially towards end of U. S. visit.
6. The type and content of final report required by FOA from each participant or group of participants. Who is report designed for, how long should it be, does it have to be in English, how can visitors get it typed, how many copies are required, when is it due?
7. Rules on excess baggage for participants flying back to home country--amount allowed free; who pays for excess.

At USDA you should have an appointment with the Program Service Office (Room 4540, South Building) of Foreign Training Division at FAS concerning:

1. Book allowances--how much for each (the amount will vary per participant); whether participants will receive amount in cash or have books ordered for them by program specialist.
2. Maintenance checks--how often they are issued, where mailed, where best cashed, identification needed for cashing, policy concerning per diem rates.
3. Your own expense accounts--how often to submit, form and content, signing of vouchers, what you can be reimbursed for and what you cannot.
4. Use of U. S. Government transportation requests and hiring of local transportation (buses, private cars) with TR's--be sure you understand how to make out TR's for a group, especially being sure to include yourself and the interpreter(s); also how you locate least expensive local transportation.

You should also confer with the travel branch in USDA. Be sure you're clear on the travel schedule outlined for the group. If there are difficult changes of train at inconvenient hours, find out why so you can explain it to the group. Also on travel, find out:



1. How far you can go in changing routes and reservations, and under what circumstances.
2. How changes affect round-trip rates.
3. Rules on using Pullman berths or roomettes.
4. Rules concerning use of coach or first-class trains.
5. Rules on excess baggage when flying in the U.S.--how much baggage is allowed free; who pays for excess.

WHEN YOU MEET THE VISITORS

To start out, be sure you can spell and pronounce their names correctly. You may have to wait till you meet each individual to get the pronunciations.

It is best not to refer to visitors as "trainees". Most project members are mature people with wide responsibilities in their home country and thus often resent being called "trainees". More acceptable is the term "participants", "visitors", "information experts", "cooperative leaders", "agricultural credit team", etc.

It's nice to learn early how to say "please" and "thank you" in the visitors' own language but you may get into trouble by "showing off" your book knowledge of a language.

Greet them with warmth and enthusiasm. Help them understand your name and your position correctly from the beginning. They will want to know how to spell your name properly, and may want your address. Point these out to them on the printed program.

You will already be familiar with the background of each of the visitors from having studied their bio-data. From the pictures accompanying the bio-data you will have become familiar with their appearance and how to pronounce their name and should have no difficulty calling them each by name immediately, unless, of course, the group is large.

See that soon after arrival here, they are shown a large definitive map of the United States and that the route of their travels here and the places and distances between to be visited are pointed out. Good maps of U.S. can be purchased from the National Geographic Society, 16th & M Streets, N. W., Washington.

You will want to be as helpful and sympathetic to each of them as you can. This is important at all times, but especially so during their first impressions of this country.

Explain to the group that you are their leader--technical consultant--and you have been assigned to this project in order to help them get the most from their visit within the scope of the project. FOA and the FAS program specialist will also explain this. Let them understand that they are free to ask questions and call upon you at any time for information or advice.

Introduce each of them to as many of your friends and associates as possible and state a word or two about who they are and their purpose for being in this country. Mention, also, that technical cooperation is a two-way affair, and that we expect to learn much from them. We have, in fact, benefited in many ways from other countries in modern times as well as ancient. For example, penicillin and DDT were both developed in Europe, many of our current top scientists immigrated to the U.S. from other countries, also some of our eminent authorities in other fields. Most all our domestic animals originated elsewhere in the world, and most of our varieties of vegetables, fruits, herbs, grains and improved grasses are imports from abroad.

Your responsibility to these visitors is not an assignment which can be completed in an eight-hour day or a forty-hour work week.

As in playing a good game of golf, the "follow through" is most important in making our strokes hit the target. A technical leader needs to have something of the missionary spirit and be able to go all the way with the visitors. Time spent with the group after work hours in social and recreational activities will be appreciated by them. These are the times that you get to know them better, and vice versa. There will be times, however, when they should be encouraged to go exploring on their own, without you.

Impress upon your group the importance of being punctual for appointments, assignments, etc. Above all, be punctual yourself.

INTERPRETERS

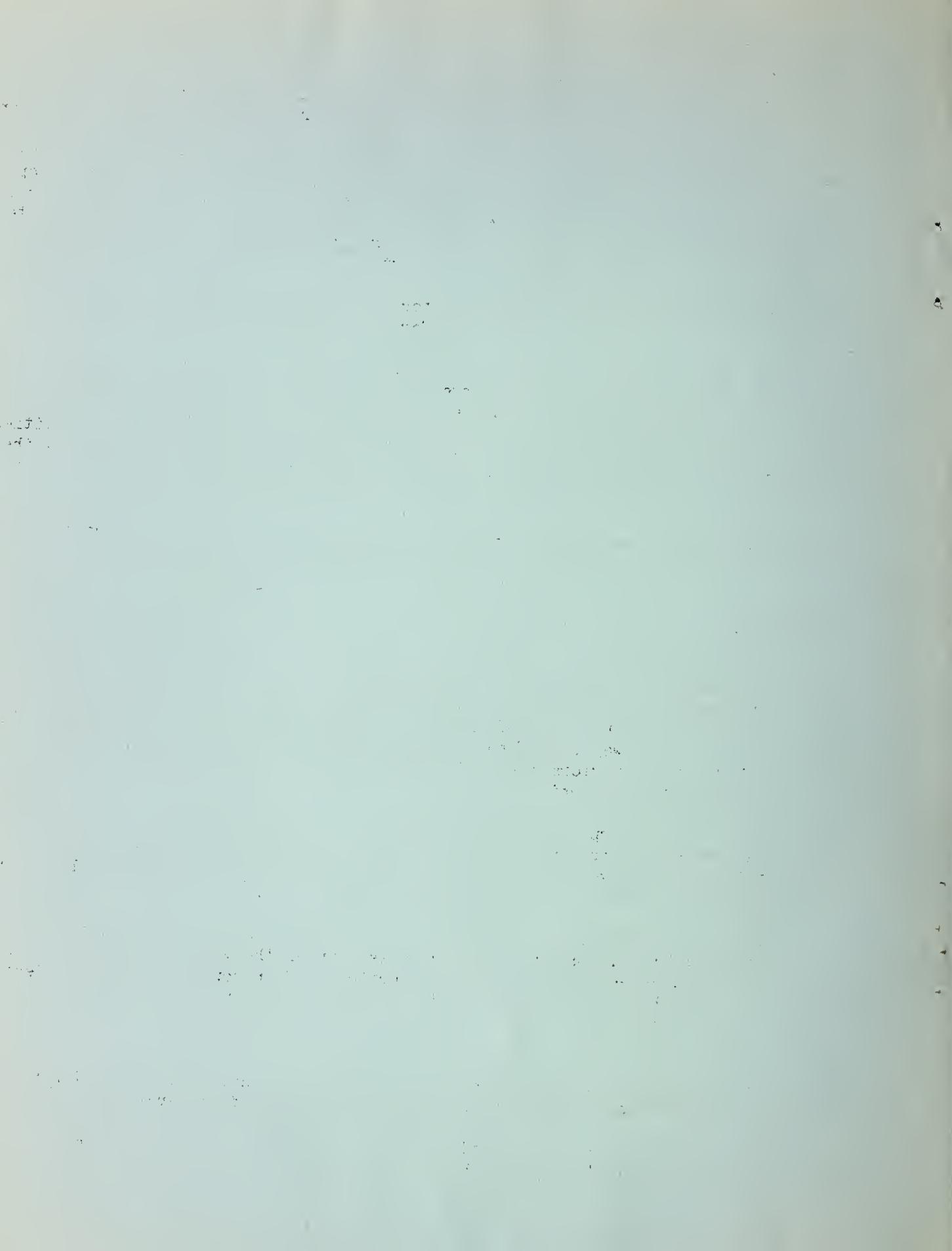
Most of the interpreters engaged for work with visiting groups are thoroughly dependable, competent, cooperative, and helpful beyond the call of duty. They are a large factor in making a training course successful. Interpreters should understand that YOU are the person of authority on this project while the group is away from Washington, that final decisions rest with you. If an interpreter's performance would seem to warrant suspension, you should contact the FAS program specialist.

While most interpreters do their best to help, it's a fact that most of them have come to this country from abroad and so may not have the same concepts of things here as you have. They do have a position of advantage in being able to converse freely with the project participants.

The technical leader should be persistent in insisting that full translations be given of all conversations or talks between the visitors and their hosts, advisors, leaders and consultant, particularly in connection with subject matter. The interpreter who "edits" such material may alter, delete or color subject matter.

Obviously, friendly relationships between the technical leader and interpreters are quite important for the sake of morale and good cooperation.

You should be prepared to file a report on the interpreters at the end of the course, as this is required by FOA.



Consideration of interpreters in any phases of the work is only fair, of course, and will help with your relationships with them. While the tendency is to expect them to make their services available at meal time, social time, shopping time, etc., in addition to the scheduled studies, the technical leader should keep in mind the physical limitations of even the most co-operative interpreter. They should have some free time for their personal affairs.

GETTING READY TO DEPART

Make sure that every arrangement has been made for the prompt forwarding and receipt of personal mail for the participants. Mail is important to them, many have never been outside their home countries before, and all are concerned about their families, their businesses, politics at home, etc.

Make sure that definite arrangements have been made and understood for mailing and receipt of per diem checks for the participants. (The interpreters will have their own arrangements.) Make certain that the participants understand this, and also that they understand what the checks are for, how much money they will get, and that their per diem is determined on the basis of kind of training and length of stay.

The insurance policy should be thoroughly explained and understood by each individual, including the amount deducted from per diem checks for insurance.

Plan now to keep the respect of the visitors throughout the course. You are their helper and coordinator. Not their boss.

Group Spokesman

You may find it helpful to have the group elect a spokesman from their number, if they are all from the same country and seem to be good friends. Having one serve as spokesman of the group would be a handicap, however, if the group is not thoroughly compatible. If they do elect a captain, be certain to delegate some duties to him. If the group is large and from several countries, you may want each country delegation to designate a spokesman or captain.

But you should feel your way on this. It isn't always desirable or feasible.

Don't make a specific point of the glories of "The American Way of Life." We like it, and think it's the best way, but visitors may not. The best approach is to practice democracy in dealing with them. Give them preferences, sympathetic understanding, little courtesies, and help them see the things here they have curiosity about. Teach American customs by routine demonstration. Put yourself in the visitors place and remember the Golden Rule.

Schedule Changes

IMPRESS upon the group that the schedule, as arranged, can be changed only for unforeseen and urgent reasons. Help them understand that the schedule might not fit each one individually, but is best for the majority. Give copies of the schedule to all participants and interpreters. Take extra copies of the program with you. Arrange time in advance, if possible, for visitation of relatives and old friends in this country where it will not interfere with the study program.

Investigate and help team members to understand thoroughly the system arranged for sending accumulated literature to their homes from points along the route of the project. Do everything you can to make the program definite before you leave Washington. Have the group study the schedule and program carefully.

Be prepared to give publicity to the group at points along the route. Have a fact sheet mimeographed for handing to local press, radio, TV, when interest is shown. This should include the full names spelled correctly, titles and connections of all the group, including yours and the interpreters.

Religious Taboos

Get acquainted early with the special taboos concerning the food they can eat, religious practices and similar matters affecting your group. They may vary from nationality to nationality. You'll find that certain religions have daily prayer rituals which must be performed and that others cannot eat meat or certain kinds of meat.

Among Christians, you may wish to discover early which are Catholics and Protestants so you can help plan for church attendance once travel gets underway.

You might also find out from the group whether any religious or national holidays fall during the period of the training course and whether these holidays will call for any special plans that will affect the traveling or training. Participants should never be asked to perform duties which violate the tenets of their religion.

ON THE TRAIL

Keep in mind that you are a technical leader, not just the manager for a guided tour. The details of organizing your group, especially during periods of travel, may tempt you to forget this. But you can best fulfill your function when you draw on your own technical competence and your experience in working in a democratic and cooperative society to help interpret the group's experiences and observations.

One of your key assets in reaching these visitors from other lands, crossing the barriers of language, race and creed, is your proven experience and technical ability in the visitors' own field or profession. Meanwhile, it is your primary responsibility while the team is away from Washington to supervise, improve, sharpen and expand the program of technical training provided for the group, always doing this in cooperation with local people in charge of training. These technical responsibilities are foremost and rank higher in priority than picking up train tickets and arranging bus transportation, important as these are.

Group Discussions

Give each participant ample opportunity to be heard when a group discussion is underway. Let them describe their countries, their situation, and their needs. You can do a lot to help the group get acquainted with each other. One of the

most important aspects of group training is this building of professional and personal ties between these participating countries--and you'll be surprised how little even neighboring countries know each other in some parts of the world.

When language differences require the use of an interpreter, the subject matter to be covered should be planned with interpreting problems firmly in mind. Don't plan to cover more than you have time for, and remember that translation cuts the time more than half. Warn speakers to speak slowly, distinctly and to avoid American slang because it won't be understood at all if translated verbatim, and perhaps the interpreter won't be familiar with it, either.

Examples: "Sell the Idea" -- "Shooting the bull" -- "Get a move on" ... "Put on the feed bag". There are better ways to communicate thoughts, anyway, if you try.

Charts and graphs with English terms and words as well as figures can be difficult to interpret and understand, while the interpreter is at the same time trying to translate what the speaker is saying.

Review Sessions

Have frequent review sessions with the group, outsiders excluded. Particular individuals can be designated from day to day to take the lead in reporting on previous day's activities. Helping to translate the things they see and do into terms and situations which are most meaningful to them and to their countries is really the most fundamental function of the technical leader.

Keep your charges aware that they are to ask questions whenever they fail to understand anything. Make yourself available for consultation with any of your charges at all times.

Rest and Health

Take care that the group gets enough rest, proper meals, etc., to stay healthy. Watch out for signs of illness (coughing, sneezing, etc.), and take steps to stop it. Do not hesitate to call a doctor if the illness seems more than a simple cold, stomach-ache or fatigue.

Some visitors attach a great respect to age. This can be understood to advantage in traveling with such a group.

If possible avoid formal programs on Saturdays and Sundays. This is a good time for correspondence, writing reports, rest, attending church and review. Include opportunities for attendance at churches of their choice, sporting events, shows and other special events of the American scene--visits to historic places, markets, shops, etc. Remember, too, that women, including women interpreters, need more time to themselves than most men do.

When groups are "on the go", keep them in the same hotel if at all possible. For groups remaining several weeks in a college town this may not always be the most practical thing to do, but the advantages of having them all together

outweigh many other considerations. True, when living in private homes—as college students often do—they can absorb more Americana, and perhaps may spend more time studying than when they are grouped together.

Avoid constant use of admonitions like "hurry up" — "step on it," because most visitors aren't accustomed to being hurried, and besides it's no way to treat guests. Try to arrange schedules so they can be met without hectic rushing.

Mail and Checks

When mail and checks arrive for the participants, distribute them promptly. Know where and when they can cash their checks; you may need to go with them. They will need their identity cards and their passports. You may need some proof of your connection with the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Hotel Accommodations

Hotel accommodations should be checked in advance by someone familiar with the local situation, for economy can be carried too far. In this regard, first ascertain the likes and dislikes of the group. Some guessing, based upon their bio-data, may have to be done in order to get advance reservations.

Don't attempt to assign roommates. If the visitors want to economize by sharing rooms, let them initiate it. Even so, they may want to rearrange themselves later.

Transportation Tickets

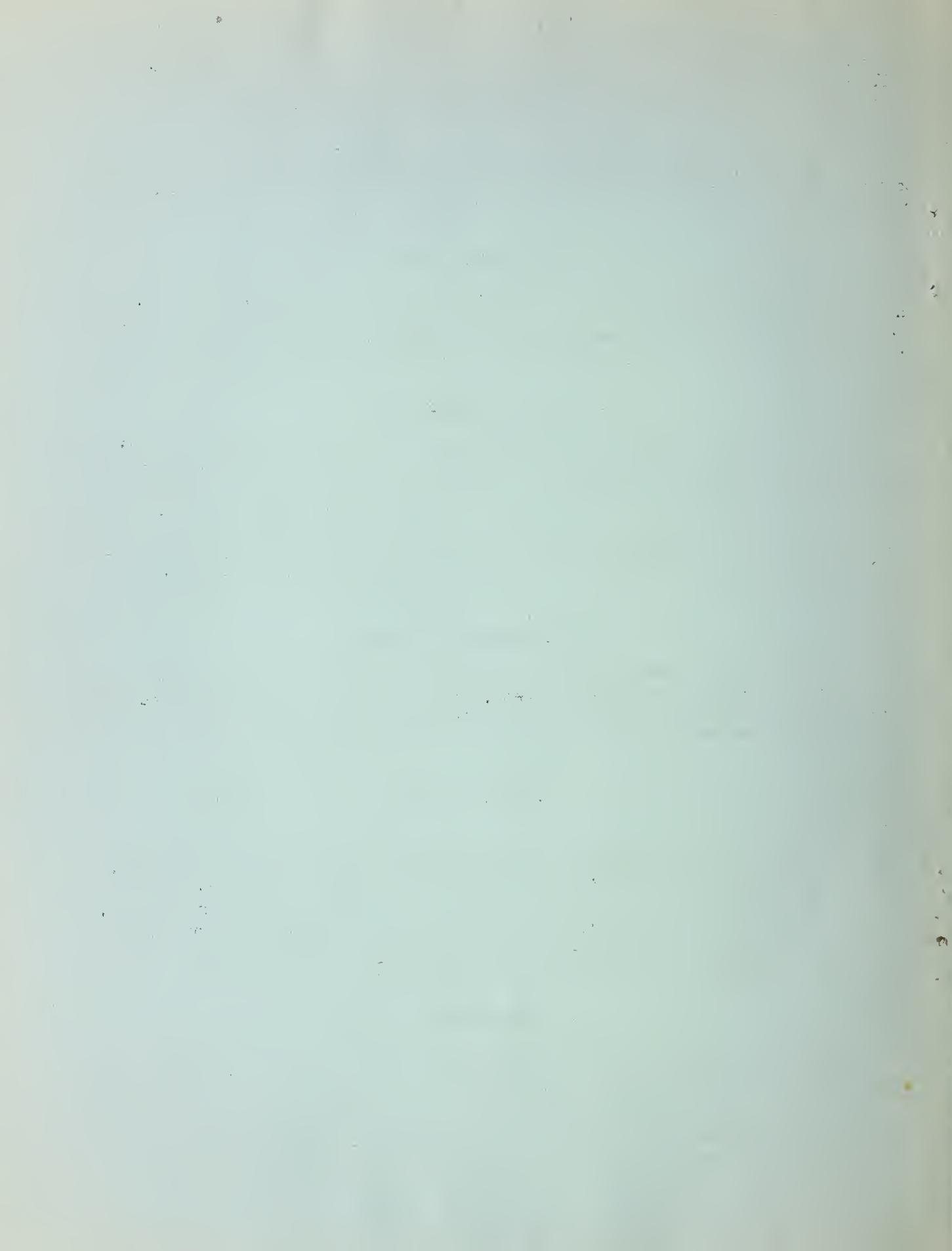
Check your transportation tickets, well in advance to see that all portions of the trip are covered by proper tickets, etc., including sleeper accommodations, and transfers between rail stations in certain large cities. If travel reservations must be made by you, do it as early as possible.

Meeting People

Determine what sort of things impress the visitors and try to use these as tools with which to emphasize different phases of the training. For instance, if they are impressed by academic degrees and titles, see that they meet several people with doctor's degrees in each place. For an agricultural group, it might be arranged to have a dignified Ph.D. perform some sort of manual demonstration personally for them—such as budding and grafting, dehorning a calf, or taking a soil sample and running a test on it.

Sightseeing

Depending upon their ages, sex and demonstrated ability to find their own way and take care of themselves, encourage them to go exploring in cities and towns, at historic spots, etc., on their own. But keep tab on where they are supposed to be and see that they don't go unaccounted for very long at a time. Take them sightseeing yourself if it's practical. Anticipate as best you can their recreational wishes and counsel them for their protection.



Suggest to them, and repeat it, that the police in the United States are helpful, and that if trouble is encountered when they are alone, the police should be called. In some countries, the popular tendency is to avoid the police as a matter of traditional good judgment. Caution them to have their passport and FOA identification on their person at all times. Mention the possibility of getting lost, losing money, identification cards or passports, being robbed, etc.

Local Publicity

Local publicity is important to our program, and the participants like it. Help them get clippings about themselves from local newspapers to send home. You may wish to contact local papers yourself, especially if you have local connections. Prepare the visitors for interrogation by reporters, either in English or through interpreters. Tell them to feel free to answer any and all questions, but to make it clear that they are here under U. S. Government sponsorship to receive certain training which may be helpful in building up their national economy at home, etc.

Materials for Shipping

Keeping in mind the FOA regulations for sending leaflets, pamphlets and other material to the Atlantic Forwarding Company, it's a good idea to make local arrangements for wrapping these materials and getting them to the Railway Express Agency. At land-grant colleges, the contact man--who usually has considerable experience in this matter--should be consulted.

If your group is large and there will be many packages to mail before the end of the training at a certain place, participants may need help in transporting packages to the post office or Railway Express. The location and business hours of the post office and express office may need to be checked. Railway Express will, of course, call for packages.

The college or other training location may be able to help by furnishing wrapping paper and string, although they are not obligated to do this. Sometimes you or a member of the group can purchase paper and string cooperatively for the whole group.

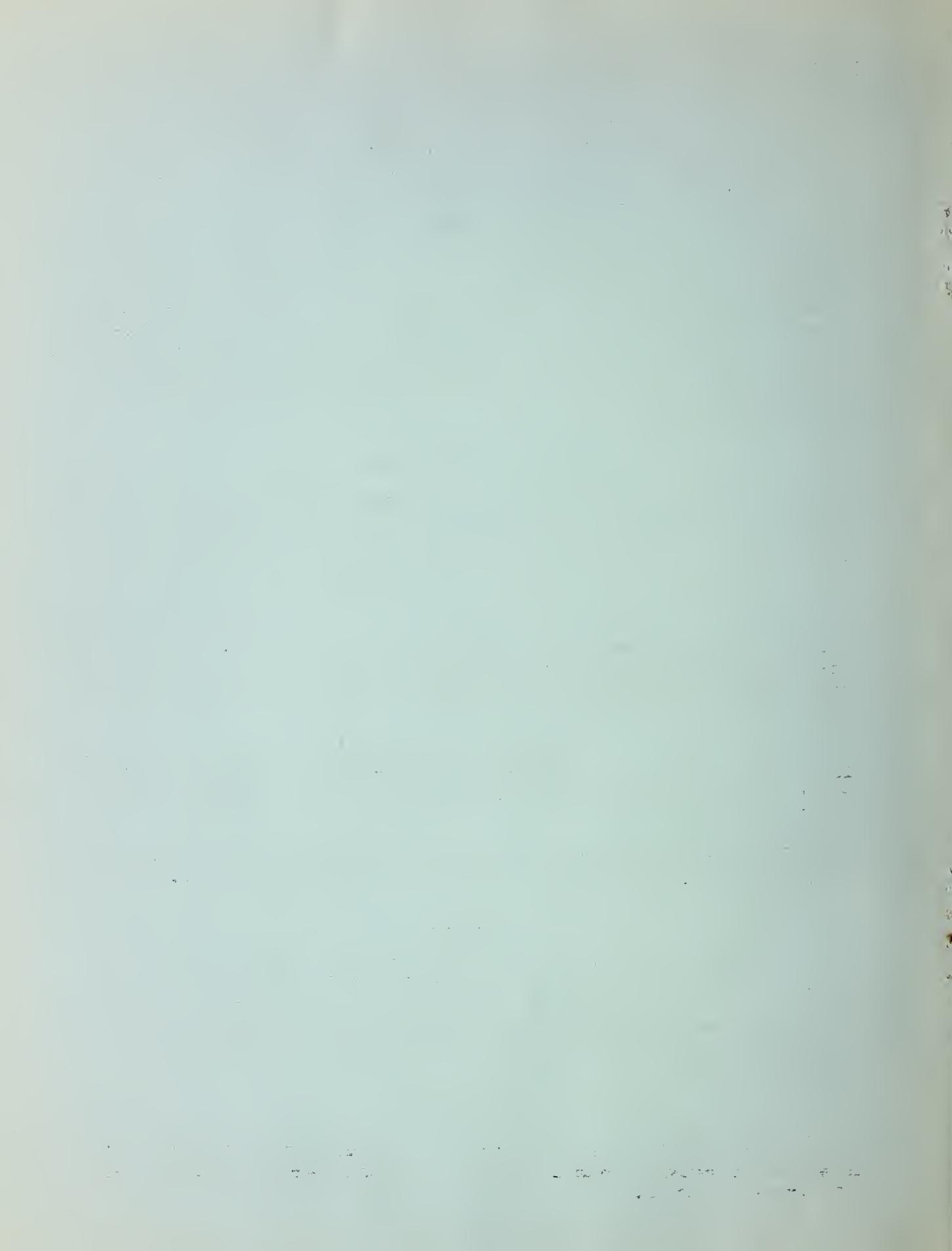
Anyway, programs at each training location need to allow time for wrapping and mailing packages. You may need to remind local people about this.

Tipping

Help the visitors learn how to deal with waitresses, pullman porters, bell hops, red caps and taxi drivers. Explain that in large cities, people who serve the public are often brusque and eager for the tip, but that this is not a peculiarly American characteristic. Tell the visitors about what amounts they should tip in order to be like other people here, and when they should or should not tip.

Miscellaneous

Encourage the participants to buy travelers cheques with most of their cash, instead of carrying it around. Money losses can be serious, and have been with some other teams.



Help visitors accept every opportunity to visit farms and farm families. Such experiences do much to interpret our kind of agriculture to them, and also helps them understand what Americans are really like. Leaving the participants with county agricultural agents, and other county agricultural workers, etc., for short periods also is helpful. Details of these experiences, however, should be spelled out in program and itinerary.

If the group, or part of it, is to be entertained at a banquet, a dinner, a reception or a party, make certain that the host hasn't forgotten the invitation, that he is aware of how many visitors will be present, and ready for them. Telephone calls ahead of time will iron out many problems. Plans made in Washington always need to be verified locally. At banquets or parties, be sure each country is called on for introductions unless the group agrees ahead of time on certain countries to represent it.

On the trip, let visitors take along material from their own countries to distribute to acquaintances. This might be literature or souvenirs. It makes for good relations. Some of this can be obtained from their respective embassies in Washington.

You may wish to help the group pick up highway maps at filling stations. This helps them to understand the geography of the area visited--of much interest to some. They also like to take these maps home with them.

When a local or college specialist repeats discussions of studies already completed--perhaps on the theory that his own experience overseas qualifies him better than others to prescribe subject matter, be diplomatic but firm--if you are convinced that duplication is not needed.

Don't forget--one of your most important jobs as a technical leader is to gauge accurately the background and accumulated understanding of your participants in order to guide the development of their studies and contacts within the limits of their program objectives and itinerary.

Correspondence Afterwards

Plan to carry on such correspondence with individuals of the group after they return as they seem to wish. You may not be able to comply with all their requests, but an occasional exchange of friendly correspondence will do much for international good will, leave a good taste in their mouths about America, and help them understand that we really do have an interest in helping them. Almost without exception, these visitors are persons of considerable influence at home and what they say when they return is of concern to us.

NOTE: One of the most useful reference materials for your orientation is "The Goals of Student Exchange", published by the Institute of International Education, January, 1955. Your program specialist should have a copy or he can get one from Dr. A. J. Nichols, Assistant Director, Foreign Training Division.

